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**Looking through a social constructivist lens to identify social and cultural factors influencing nursing in the UAE**

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**Background & Aim:** The nursing profession today is facing significant global challenges in the area of workforce imbalances and underlying this multifaceted problem is one of decreased supply and increased demand, with negative impacts affecting health care systems around the world. The situation is true in the UAE as well. The purpose is to critically explore the issue through a social constructivist lens, with a view to broaden understanding on the phenomena and highlight the complex web of inter-related socio-cultural circumstances that surround the Emirati nursing students, their families and their immediate local community's perception of the nursing profession in the United Arab Emirates.

**Method:** Review of existing literature and a hermeneutic phenomenological interview, conducted with an Emirati nurse currently pursuing a post-graduate bridging nursing degree in Abu Dhabi while working in the Emirate, to elicit some empirical findings on the issues.

**Findings:** Select socio-cultural factors influencing the profession in the country include the changing face of nursing and the nursing student, night shift duty, disapproving family members and relatives, lack of awareness among the local population, poor media portrayal and limited role models. Islamic factors having a bearing on the societal perception of nursing include contrasting values such as strict ethical and moral principles in society. Political factors influencing the local perception include poor governmental resources for nursing and nursing schools and approval of licensure for immigrant workers. Professional factors contributing to the phenomenon includes nursing being a developing profession.

**Conclusion:** Each of the factors, by themselves contribute to the poor societal recognition of nursing in the UAE, together they form a formidable web of interrelated factors demonstrating the uphill battle that leaders in nursing face, in professionalizing nursing in the country.

**Recent Publications**

1. Devadas B (2017) Nursing Education Leaders Experiences of Emirati Nursing Student Recruitment and Retention. *The Journal of Middle East and North Africa Sciences*; 3(11): 12-24.
2. Devadas B R (2017) Emirati student recruitment and retention in nursing education using a mixed methods approach. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*;

**Biography**

Briliya Devadas is working as an Assistant Professor at the Fatima College of Health Sciences, UAE. Her use of the socio-constructivist model has helped to gain insight in the culture of the nursing profession. Her investigations are in recruitment and retention within the organization, in nursing education and the role of nurse education leaders in dealing with the issue.

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